

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 2, 6 and 10 have been amended. No new matter is added. It is respectfully submitted that this Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action dated August 25, 2004.

Claim Objections:

Claim 1 stands objected to in item 1 of the Action, due to the Examiner's assertion that lines 5-6 of claim 1 need to be reworded in order to provide an adequate explanation of the process Applicants wish to describe more clearly. Claim 1, as amended, overcomes this objection. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

As to the Merits:

As to the merits of this case, the Examiner sets forth the following rejections:

1) claims 1, 6, 9 - 11, 14, 15, 17 and 18 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Igarashi-1 (U.S. Patent No. 5,902,232);

2) claim 2 stands rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Igarashi ('232) in view Igarashi-2 (U.S. Patent No. 5,954,634); and

3) claims 3, 4, 7, 8, 12, 13 and 16 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Igarashi ('232), Igarashi ('634) and Takahashi (U.S. Patent No. 5,588,848).

Each of these rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 of the present invention defines an endoscope in which the objective optical system forms an image of an object, a relay optical system forms an image of the object formed by the objective optical system, an imaging optical system forms an image of the relayed image, and a solid state image sensor receives the image formed by the imaging optical system. Therefore, at least three (3) images are formed in the endoscope defined in claim 1.

The endoscope shown in Fig. 3 of Igarashi -1 (U.S. Patent No. 5, 902,232) comprises the cylindrical insert section 1 that forms the image I1, the imaging lens system IL that forms an image of the image I1, and the image sensor in the TV camera 4 that receives the image formed by the imaging lens system IL. Only two images are formed in the endoscope and there is no relay optical system that relays the image formed by the objective optical system.

The endoscope shown in Fig. 12 of Igarashi -1 (U.S. Patent No. 5,902,232) comprises the objective lens system O that forms the image I1, the relay lens unit R1 that forms an image of the image I1, and the lens system 12 of the TV camera 6 that forms an image of the relayed image, and the image pick-up device 11 that receives the image formed by the lens system 12. Here three images are formed in the endoscope.

However, since no part of the relay lens unit is in the TV camera 6, the arrangement of the relay lens unit is different from that of the present invention.

Therefore, the invention defined in claim 1 is not anticipated by Igarashi-1.

Response under 37 C.F.R. §1.111

Attorney Docket No. 010680

Serial No. 09/893,677

Igarashi -2 (U.S. Patent No. 5,945,634) and Takahashi (U.S. Patent No. 5,954,634) also do not disclose or suggest the invention disclosed in claim 1. Therefore, the combination of Igarashi-1, Igarashi-2 and/or Takahashi (U.S. Patent No. 5,954,634) does not render the present invention obvious.

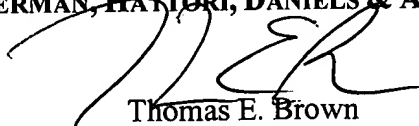
In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicants submit that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

WESTERMAN, HATTORI, DANIELS & ADRIAN, LLP



Thomas E. Brown
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 44,450

TEB/jl

1250 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 822-1100